

## DROUGHT SITUATION RESPONSE UPDATE

September 2023



*In the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, cousins Nafiso Ibrahim, 11, and Ruweida Abukar, 13, seek shelter from the intense sun beneath a makeshift kitchen. They were displaced due to the latest drought in Somalia. © UNHCR/Samuel Otiemo.*

### Situation Overview

The ongoing impacts of the catastrophic drought suffered by the Horn of Africa continue to severely affect millions of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their host communities in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Across the region, climate impacts continue to exacerbate the challenges vulnerable populations face with the combination of conflict and drought – followed by rains and flooding – severely affecting their search for safety, basic necessities and a means to survive. Our responses across the region factors in the impact of extreme weather events, such as the recurring cycle of droughts and floods attributed to climate change.

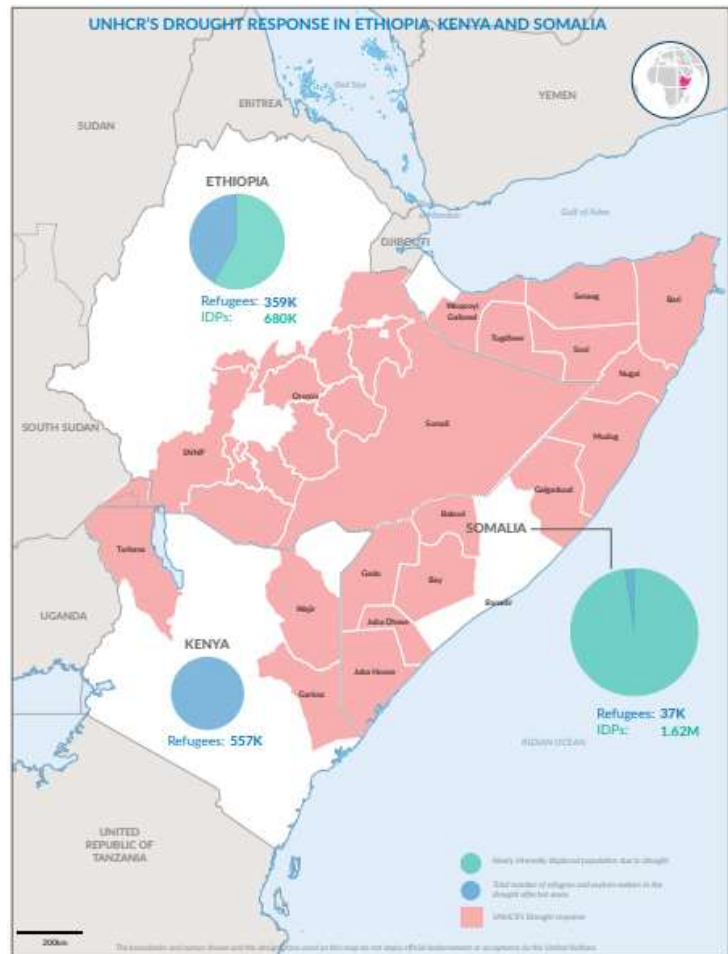
By the end of September, according to [UNHCR's drought dashboard](#) 2.3 million people had been internally displaced in Ethiopia and Somalia due to the drought and some 265,000 new refugees and asylum-seekers had crossed from and into drought-affected areas of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

In **Ethiopia**, parts of the Oromia region have recently felt the impact of the *Kiremt* rainy season with heavy rainfall and floods. The Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners Flood Contingency Plan for 2023 *Kiremt* season had forecasted that more than 270,200 people were likely to be affected in Oromia. (Link: <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/unfpa-ethiopia-humanitarian-response-situation-report-august-2023>). The main needs for displaced populations include, food, shelter, and non-food items, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and healthcare services, especially to prevent the exacerbation of malaria and cholera outbreaks due to the floods. While in West Hararge Zone, Oromia region, seventy thousand families have reportedly lost the Meher crop due to the long dry sessions during the months of July and August which could significantly increase the number of people requiring food assistance. According to a recent multiagency assessment, IDPs hosted in West Guji have not received assistance for several months due to insecurity and funding constraints. About

159,400 people in West Guji, Oromia region, will remain in need of food assistance for the coming six to eight months, because of low crop yields due to the impact of environmental change.

In the Somali Region, over one million people are reportedly facing acute water shortages in 323 locations across Afder, Dawa, Korahe, Liban and Shabelle zones. Despite rains between April and June this year, pastoral and agropastoral communities have lost their primary sources of water, mainly surface water structures such as boreholes and river intakes in the drier months of June, July, and August. Zonal authorities are currently providing water to affected communities through water trucking, however the situation requires urgent funding to address shortages particularly in the IDP sites. (see also OCHA Situation Report, 7 September 2023 and 9 October 2023. Link: <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ethiopia>).

In **Kenya**, among the 23 arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya, there are ten (10) counties in alarm phase, ten others are in alert stage, while three (3) are in normal drought due to moderate off-season rains. Garissa county experienced below-average rainfall in September 2023 with only 8.60 mm compared to the long-term average of 17.1 mm. This difference suggests a drier September than usual based on historical data.



See [September 2023 Drought Dashboard](#) for more details.

In Dadaab in September, there were reportedly 942,000 children under 5 years and 134,000 pregnant and lactating women, who required treatment for acute malnutrition compared to 884,464 children and 115,725 women, who required such treatment in August 2023.

In **Somalia**, the operating environment continued to be challenging. Drought, armed conflict, and clashes between clans continued to uproot thousands of Somalis from their homes. Better than expected rainfall and responses from the local population, authorities, and humanitarian community have averted the worst outcomes of the drought, yet the situation is still worrisome. It is estimated that 8.25 million people require humanitarian assistance; 4.3 million are facing acute food insecurity; and 1.5 million children are likely to be acutely malnourished from August to December 2023<sup>1</sup>.

According to the UNHCR-led [Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), 61,000 displacements within Somalia were recorded in September primarily due to drought (57%) and conflict or insecurity (23%), bringing the total number of internal displacements in 2023 to more than 1.5 million. In the aftermath of the historic drought, a large-scale humanitarian response and favorable rainfall deterred famine in early 2023.

Yet, Somalia is on the verge of another climate emergency, as there is a high likelihood that El-Niño, during the *Deyr* rainy season that starts in October, will bring heavy rains and floods. More up-to-date information about displacement and the protection needs of the IDPs can be found at the new PRMN online interactive dashboard: <https://prmn-somalia.unhcr.org/>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia-IPC-Acute-Food-Insecurity-Malnutrition-Report-Aug-Dec-2023.pdf>

## UNHCR response

### ETHIOPIA

#### SOMALI REGION

##### Refugees

In the five refugee camps in Melkadida, the enrollment of children in need of treatment for acute malnutrition continued to increase indicating the continued grave food insecurity in the area. Nutrition products received from UNICEF (4,577 cartons (67 MT) Plumpynut, 21 cartons (0.3 MT) therapeutic milk and 4 cartons of ResoMal) and WFP (902 cartons PlumpySup and 4687 Super Cereal Plus) are supporting children under the age of two, pregnant and lactating mothers and malnourished individuals. Some of the therapeutic products (100 cartons of Plumpynut) were also donated to Bokolmanyo woreda/district which had reported acute shortage of nutrition products. In September, a total of 6,605 Children were treated for Moderate Acute Malnutrition (4,798) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (1,807). In addition, a total of 15,927 individuals, including 10,723 children under the age of two, 4,850 pregnant and lactating women, and 354 others with specific needs received supplementary feeding.

The cholera outbreak in Dollo Ado, Somali region, has been officially declared as controlled by the regional health officials. Overall, 721 people were reported to have contracted the disease, with the outbreak lasting for five months.

##### Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

UNHCR conducted an 8-day mission to Afder Zone to monitor the humanitarian and protection situation and worked on strengthening the capacity of protection and local government partners. The team also held coordination meetings with all actors. The situation in the IDP sites is dire with insufficient assistance due to funding constraints.

UNHCR distributed Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) to a total of 2,398 individuals in Faayo Dhobo and Godgod IDP sites in the Dawa zone. The distribution was conducted in coordination with Zonal Disaster and Risk Management Office (DRM) and UNHCR's partner Organization of Welfare and Development in Action (OWDA).

UNHCR conducted three protection monitoring missions in Tog-wajaale, Qoloji and Awbarre in the Fafan zone to identify protection needs of the IDPs. The main issues raised by the community include the lack of general relief assistance, housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, poor shelter conditions and limited access to basic services. In Follow up to the findings of the mission, UNHCR is working with partner Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Jijiga University on legal awareness and support, in particular acquisition of identification documents, as well as HLP rights-related facilitation. Through the Protection Cluster, advocacy for particularly on food security, shelter, health and WASH will also be conducted. The findings will further be used for advocacy purposes with other clusters and beyond.

UNHCR distributed MPC assistance to 319 drought affected families in Darida village in the Nogob zone to assist them meet their basic needs. Overall, 2,998 families were reached with the assistance since August 2023.

UNHCR facilitated a three-day workshop in Jijiga city to 40 government frontline workers from the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs (BoWCA), Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BoLSA), Disaster Risk Management Bureau (DRMB), Sharia Court, Justice Bureau, and Vital Event Registrations Agency (VERA) across the 11 zones of the Somali region. The aim of the workshop was to introduce the general concepts of protection and protection in emergencies in the context of the Somali region, where climate change and conflict affected IDPs reside. Technical support was also extended to the government agencies involved in providing protection services to the community. Partners also shared operational experiences and proposed recommendations on gaps and needs for further advocacy.



*Women wait to receive a cash distribution by UNHCR in Darso IDP camp due to the harsh drought in Ethiopia. ©UNHCR/Tiksa Negeri*

## **OROMIA REGION**

### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

UNHCR's partner Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Services Commission (EECMY/DASSC) in collaboration with government sector offices, community-based structure representatives and other partners provided an in-kind assistance to a total of 88 families (of which 74 are women headed) to enable them to start individual income generating activities in Kercha and Abaya Woredas in the West Guji zone, Oromia region. The support was distributed in-kind in way of sheep, goat, and small business startup materials/capital. The selection of beneficiaries is based on the selection criteria set by UNHCR and the stakeholders in addition to the protection assessment findings. The distribution has taken place in collaboration with government sector offices, UNHCR, partners, and community-based structure representatives.

In Konso zone, following the verification process that was done through the community-based structures in coordination with UNHCR and stakeholders, 473 drought affected families were selected in Machake, Gerra, and Kamale Kebeles for the next in-kind/cash distribution.

## **SOMALI REGION**

### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

The Sub-National Protection Cluster in the Somali region held its monthly coordination meeting with 19 humanitarian partners including UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs. Some of the protection concerns raised are limited recovery from repetitive shocks (insecurity, drought and floods), massive displacement, increased gender-based violence against women and children, drug abuse, lack of civil documentation, forced evictions especially in areas where IDPs are staying in publicly owned properties and further risks of evictions, and limited availability of basic social services on ground including peacebuilding and social cohesion activities.

In Qoloji IDP settlement in Fafan zone of Somali region, UNHCR identified 60 participants of diverse IDP community members, for transitional justice dialogue which will be carried out by the technical transitional justice working group supported by UNHCR.

UNHCR distributed core relief items in Jeedhane relocation site, in Siti zone of the Somali region.

## **KENYA**

### **DADAAB**

Dadaab continues to receive new arrivals mainly from Somalia due to drought, insecurity, climate change, and the related lack of basic services in some parts of Somalia. By 30 September, 37,743 newly arrived refugees were registered. UNHCR and partners work with refugee leadership structures to ensure effective protection of all new arrivals in the camps.

#### **Education**

A total of 345 newly arrived children were enrolled in primary school in Ifo2 settlement, increasing the enrolment of newly arrived children in Ifo2 to 2,551 (1,480 Male and 1,071 Female) learners including 75 (41 girls) children with disabilities. Cumulatively, since November 2022, 5,115 (2,271 Female and 2,844 Male) newly arrived children (between 14-17 years) have been enrolled in schools across the three refugee camps and Ifo2 settlement. Each learner has been provided with a learners' kit comprising of a school bag with 8 exercise books, pens, and other assorted stationeries for learning.

#### **Health and Nutrition**

To enhance access to health and nutrition services, UNHCR and its partners continue to create awareness on available services among new arrivals. For populations settling in the outskirts, outposts and outreach services continue to be provided to improve coverage and reduce morbidity and mortality. Medical outreach services provide malnutrition screening, immunization, treatment of common ailments, antenatal care, deworming, and referrals for those requiring admission or specialized care. Disease surveillance activities were intensified, as the new arrivals continue to come into the camps, especially for polio, measles, chikungunya, and dengue fever. Coordination engagements of all stakeholders remain in place for effective responses in terms of prevention and control of disease outbreaks. Monthly blood drives continue to be conducted to boost stocks of safe blood and blood products in partnership with the Ministry of Health for screening.

Additional facilities to improve access to health services were operationalized in Ifo2 to serve those who were relocated from Ifo1. One level and one health post provide primary health care services and inpatient. A total of 4,236 consultations and 34 deliveries were conducted in Ifo2 during the period under review.

A further decrease in acute malnutrition admissions was recorded, particularly severe acute malnutrition. This is attributed to the partners' intensified efforts in active cases search, especially among new arrivals. Severe acute malnutrition admissions were 367 compared to 455 in the month of August while the moderate acute malnutrition admissions recorded were 1,000 compared to 1,092 in the previous reporting period. The program performance was maintained within the Sphere standards.

#### **Shelter**

There were no semi-permanent shelters constructed for the new arrivals affected by the drought during the reporting period due to lack of funding. Low shelter coverage in the Dadaab camps is further exacerbated by the government ban on the construction of permanent shelters for refugees since 2016. As of end September, a total of 1,378 individuals (321 households) were supported with shelter out of 45,000 individuals targeted for shelter intervention in Ifo2. Registered refugees relocating to Ifo 2 settlement were supported with two tarpaulins and a piece of 10m rope per household as part of shelter support.

#### **WASH**

Water for refugees in the Dadaab refugee camps was pumped from 25 borehole water supply schemes, stored in 43 elevated steel tanks, and distributed through a 246 kilometres pipeline network to 872 end-user points (also referred to as tap stands). The daily per capita water available for September was 20 litres. Latrine coverage was 55 percent.

Due to the cholera outbreak, chlorination levels at the boreholes and regular monitoring of Free Residue Chlorine (FRC) maintained at – 1.5mg/ltr, 1.0-1.2 mg/ltr at tap stands, and 0.5mg/l – 0.9mg/ltr at the household

level. Over 83% of the total samples (5,422) analyzed ranged between 0.5mg/l to 1.5mg/l at boreholes, tap stands and household level.

### **Livelihood**

A total of 251 individuals were reached with varied livelihood activities benefiting refugees and members of host community, including (i) a 3-day refresher training on good agricultural practices (ii) integrated pest management training covering (iii) farmers linkage with agricultural extension services and (iv) seed distribution.

### **Host Community**

#### **WASH**

UNHCR and partners are prioritizing efforts for short, medium, and long-term interventions in the WASH sector, especially water in the host communities surrounding the Dadaab refugee camps. There are 16,467 individuals (2,745 households) residing in the host community villages surrounding the three refugee camps. These pastoral families are presently affected by the drought, some of whom are presently provided with water trucking support through UNHCR since 2022. There were 10 trips to host community sites such as Bula Daidai, Gubakibir, Tawfiq, Dolal, and institution like Dadaab and Kiwanja primary schools, GSU Ege Dam, and Haji Idris girls High around Dadaab town with a population of 12,500 people.

### **SOMALIA**

#### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

In Kismayo, UNHCR, through its partner, provided 379 core relief item kits to new arrivals who had recently fled their homes due to the drought and insecurity. These kits included essential household items like blankets, mattresses, jerry cans, and a kitchen set, among others.

UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner, conducted GBV prevention and response awareness-raising activities in Bardale, Baidoa, and Burhakaba, reaching 1,125 individuals. Furthermore, the team also provided psychosocial counseling and information on the availability of protection help desks, reaching 1,489 individuals.

UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner, completed vulnerability assessments of 10,724 individuals in Baidoa, Buur Hakaba, Bardale, and Kismayo. Eligible families will receive emergency shelter kit, cash for core relief items (CRI), or multipurpose cash assistance.

UNHCR participated in coordination forums and meetings across the country to plan and prepare for the anticipated El-Niño rains in October.

In Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partner, registered 2,855 households (19,644 individuals) in IDP sites in the Togdheer, Sool, and Sanaag regions for CRI distribution. UNHCR has verified the beneficiary lists of all registered beneficiaries, and the distribution is scheduled for the second week of October 2023. While the identified 1,778 HHs (12,651 individuals) are IDPs affected by drought in Togdheer and Sanaag regions, the remaining 1,077 HHs (6,993 individuals) are IDPs affected by conflict in Oog and Ainabo in the Sool region.

The UNHCR-supported roving psychosocial counseling team supported 70 individuals (49 females and 21 males) suffering from various mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, with psychosocial counseling in 11 IDP sites in Dhusamareb.

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